

# Written

Testimony of Tom Swan

Executive Director of the Connecticut Citizen Action Group (CCAG)

On Various Bills (SB 900, SB 901, SB 902, and HB 6580) Before the Government Administration  
and Elections Committee

March 11, 2013

Good Afternoon Senator Musto, Representative Jutila and other members of the GAE Committee, my name is Tom Swan and I am the Executive Director of the CT Citizen Action Group (CCAG). On behalf of CCAG's over 20,000 member families I want to thank you for holding today's hearing. I will be offering brief comments on a number of the bills before you today.

First, SB 900 AAC Revisions to the State Ethics Code. CCAG supports the amending of the terms of CEAB members and the ability to recover financial benefits received by a state contractor, and the technical change in the filing deadline. We want to take this opportunity to raise our concerns with the entire consolidation into the Office of Government Accountability and our opposition to Governor's proposed budget changes.

Second, SB 901 AAC Post Election Audits. We oppose this bill because the audits are instrumental in voters having faith in our elections system and the way this bill cuts them in half will lessen our confidence.

Third, CCAG supports SB 902 AAC legal Notices in Newspapers. We would actually propose the state create a web page where legal notices are hosted and eliminate this cost for municipalities. Newspaper readership continues to decline and the value these notices used to provide is no longer there. There are cheaper and more effective ways to notify the public and we should take advantage of them.

Finally HB 6580 AAC Failure to File a Report of an Independent Expenditure. CCAG supports the idea of increasing these penalties. We saw how secretive independent expenditures were successful in at least one race this year. The individuals and entities behind the attacks have not been punished. Clearly they did not see the possible punishment as enough of deterrent to make them follow the law. Therefore, we need make sure that the punishment is enough and structured in a manner to discourage breaking of the law or would match the violation, which is significant.

Thanks you for your time.